

I have been concerned about the lack of balanced press coverage throughout the past four years. When a broadcasting company like Pappas Telecasting Companies 'donates' \$325,000 in airtime to Republican candidates, this is a clear example of this lack of balance. It also illustrates how powerful media groups have been abusing their privileged access to the public airwaves.

Localism is not served when a corporate headquarters decides to provide one side in local elections a louder voice than others. During election season, local audiences should be offered genuine debate -- not disingenuous offers to "purchase" an equal amount of response time.

Pappas uses the public airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Pappas' actions are legally questionable and cast doubt on whether Pappas truly intends to serve the public interest. Their actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. Further, they show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than just a returned postcard.

The American public has faced four years of intimidation by the Bush administration, and the press has served as its lapdog. It is time that unfair practices such as that of the Pappas Telecasting Companies be stopped. Thank you.